



Facts About lead and Drinking Water

What is lead?

Lead is a soft, pliable metal once commonly used in pipe, plumbing and paint manufacturing. National health regulations in the early 1970s helped reduce the public's exposure to lead and lead components in building materials and in 1988 amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act strictly regulated lead levels in drinking water.

Why is lead dangerous?

When lead is ingested it may cause lead poisoning. Infants and young children are typically more vulnerable to lead in drinking water than the general population. Infants and children who drink water containing lead in excess of the action level could experience delays in their physical or mental development. Children could show slight deficits in attention span and learning abilities. Adults who drink this water over many years could develop kidney problems or high blood pressure. Testing for lead poisoning is done by taking a blood sample.

How might lead get into drinking water?

There are no detectable lead contaminants in the source water that enters our drinking water production plant nor is there any detectable lead in the finished water the plant produces and delivers to consumers. Lead levels may increase and become detectable in a home's drinking water if the home has older water pipes or plumbing fixtures that contain lead. In fact, lead levels can continue to increase, especially if the water has been sitting in contact with the lead materials for extended periods of time.

How can I determine if water from my tap is lead-free?

It is not always possible to tell if you have any piping or fixtures containing lead in your home by making a visual inspection. If you suspect that your home does have existing lead plumbing materials and would like to have your homes water tested for lead content, please contact our **Water Quality Supervisor, Cheri Armstrong**, at **719-584-0467**.

What if there is lead in my water?

If lead is present in your home's plumbing, flushing your tap for 30 seconds to 2 minutes before using the water for consumption will decrease the amount of lead in the water. If your home has lead plumbing or a lead service line, flushing from 3 to 5 minutes may be required to adequately reduce lead levels before the water is used for consumption.

This must be done each time your water has been off for 6 hours or more. Boiling water will NOT remove lead contaminants.

Learning more about lead

Additional information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available from the **Safe Drinking Water Hotline (1-800-426-4791)** or at **<http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead>**.

Information regarding blood testing for lead content may be obtained by calling the **Pueblo City-County Health Department at 719-583-4300**.